



**ARIZONA STATE SENATE**  
*Fifty-Fifth Legislature, First Regular Session*

**AMENDED**  
FACT SHEET FOR S.B. 1403

literacy; dyslexia screening

Purpose

Modifies the implementation timelines for dyslexia training and screening plans.

Background

*Dyslexia* is a condition of neurological origin that is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities ([A.R.S. § 15-701](#)). The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) develops and maintains the Dyslexia Handbook to provide pupils, parents and teachers guidance on the identification of dyslexia, strategies to improve academic performance and available resources and services ([Dyslexia Handbook](#)).

Statute directs ADE to develop a dyslexia screening plan by July 1, 2020, that ensures each student in kindergarten or grade one in an Arizona public school is screened for indicators of dyslexia, provides guidance for parental notification of students who are identified as having indicators of dyslexia and is developed collaboratively with the ADE-designated dyslexia specialist and other experts. Screening for indicators of dyslexia is based on: 1) phonological and phonemic awareness; 2) rapid naming skills; 3) correspondence between sounds and letters; 4) nonsense word repetition; and 5) sound symbol recognition ([A.R.S. § 15-704](#)).

A dyslexia specialist must be designated by ADE to provide school districts and charter schools with support and resources to assist students with dyslexia. By July 1, 2021, at least one kindergarten through grade three teacher at each district and charter school must receive training related to dyslexia ([A.R.S. § 15-211](#)).

[Laws 2019, Chapter 198](#) created the Study Committee on Dyslexia Screening, Intervention and Funding for Pupils Identified as Having Indicators of Dyslexia, which held five public hearings and recommended that the Legislature: 1) amend the indicators used in dyslexia screening; 2) amend the timeframe for ADE to develop a dyslexia screening plan and for schools to implement dyslexia training for teachers; 3) establish a regional training model to increase capacity for teacher training and enhance awareness of the indicators of dyslexia; 4) increase annual funding to ADE for additional employees to address the implementation of dyslexia screening, to provide early literacy professional development for teachers, to augment the Move on When Reading program, and to gather, aggregate, and analyze statewide data; 5) provide additional funding to enhance professional development and expand teacher training opportunities, improve screening measures and intervention materials and provide intensive instruction for specific students; 6) consider adding a reading exam to the certification process to ensure candidates for elementary education certification are prepared for reading instruction; and 7) add course requirements to university curriculum and training to support teaching the science of reading.

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the state General Fund associated with this legislation.

Provisions

1. Delays, from July 1, 2021, to July 1, 2022, the requirement for each school district and charter school to ensure that at least one kindergarten through grade three teacher receives dyslexia training at each school.
2. Delays, from July 1, 2020, to July 1, 2022, the requirement for ADE to develop a dyslexia screening plan.
3. Includes *nonsense word fluency*, instead of *nonsense word repetition*, in the prescribed screening for indicators of dyslexia.
4. Directs the State Board of Education to develop rules requiring applicants for common school instruction certification to complete 45 classroom hours or 3 credits, or the equivalent, in research-based science of reading instruction, including systematic phonics instruction.
5. Requires by July 1, 2023, the subject knowledge test for early childhood and elementary education to include an examination on reading instruction.
6. Becomes effective on the general effective date.

Amendments Adopted by Committee

1. Establishes additional certification requirements for applicants for common school instruction.
2. Requires the subject knowledge test for early childhood and elementary education to include an examination on reading instruction.

Senate Action

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Prepared by Senate Research

February 11, 2021

JO/gs